

## **Excessive Structures Connecting The Bicycle-Pedestrian Bridge to the Mount Vernon Trail Within The George Washington Memorial Parkway**

Commissioners:

An illustration on page 27 in the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's (VPRRA's) July 2022 submission shows that the bicycle-pedestrian bridge will have both a ramp and a staircase that will connect the bridge to the Mount Vernon Trail within the George Washington Memorial Parkway. These connections would be located within an environmentally sensitive area within or very close to the Potomac River's Resource Protection Area (RPA). Arlington County's map of its Streams, Watersheds and Resource Protection Areas at <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/building/documents/codes-and-ordinances/watersheds-rpa-map.pdf> shows the portion of the RPA that is within and near the project area.

To protect the Chesapeake Bay's watershed, new construction near and within an RPA needs to be closely monitored and limited to the greatest extent feasible. Such limitations are also needed within historic and natural areas within national parks, including the George Washington National Parkway.

In 1987, the sidewalks on the Key Bridge were widened to 9 feet, 10 inches. The bicycle-pedestrian path on the present Woodrow Wilson Bridge, which opened in 2009, is 12 feet wide. The paths on both bridges are wide enough for safe and comfortable use by pedestrians, cyclists and motorized scooter operators, even during peak hours.

**Additionally, there does not appear to be any real need for both a wide ramp and a wide staircase to connect a bridge and a trail within this RPA and national park.** The two structures will each increase stormwater runoff into the Potomac River and will detract from the views of the Parkway.

## **RECOMMEDATIONS:**

Please vote to:

- Recommend the removal of the staircase connecting the bicycle-pedestrian bridge and the Mount Vernon Trail.
- Limit the width of the ramp connecting the bridge and the trail to 13 feet.

**That is all that is actually needed to provide a safe and convenient connection between the bridge and the trail.**

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